

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 stand rejected as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Schneider (DE 197 17 511 A1) in view of Haas (DE 38 42 835 A1). This rejection is respectfully but strenuously traversed. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

The Examiner contends that Schneider discloses a conveyorized horizontal processing line for wet processing a workpiece comprising at least one respective transport member (rollers visible in the figures) extending in a horizontal direction of transport, and at least one processing facility (bath 1) which forms one structural component (transport-und Führrungs-elemente-items 2) above the conveying path.

The Examiner acknowledges that Schneider is deficient of disclosing at least one adjusting device to raise and lower a structural component. The Examiner then relies on Haas for its alleged disclosure of at least one adjusting device (the raising device recited in the abstract) to raise and lower a structural component, which the Examiner contends provides adjustment of the nip of the rollers. Applicant's invention is distinguishable over the cited references and is not taught, suggested or disclosed thereby.

Claim 1 in the Applicant's present invention claims *at least one respective transport member and at least one processing facility*. Schneider fails to disclose the features disclosed and claimed by the Applicant. Applicant's invention further claims that the at least one processing facility forms, together with the at least one transport member, one structural component above the conveying path. The at least one transport

member is identified in the Schneider reference to be the rollers visible in the Figures (items 2). The Examiner contends that the “processing facility” would be the bath container (item 1) of Schneider. Schneider, however, does not disclose the bath 1 and the rollers 2 being a structural component. The structural component of the Applicant’s present invention is defined to be moved or pivoted. Claim 1 of the Applicant’s invention provides for:

(c) the at least one adjusting device (4; 9, 10; 5, 26) being configured in such a manner that the structural component may be raised or lowered in a substantially vertical direction and/or may be pivoted.

The Examiner does not allege that Schneider would disclose the at least one adjusting device being configured in such a manner that the structural component may be raised or lowered and/or may be pivoted. However, Schneider does not disclose that the bath container (item 1) may be moved and/or pivoted. In general, bath containers are designed so that they cannot be moved and/or pivoted, (as there is much weight when these containers are filled with a treatment liquid – sometimes several tons). Therefore, Schneider does not provide a disclosure let alone the necessary teaching or suggestion to make the modification proposed by the Examiner. Schneider does not disclose that the bath could be moved together with the rollers. Nor would one of skill be motivated to do this. To the contrary, one skilled in the art would not be led to move or pivot a liquid bath. When Applicant’s invention, as recited in the claims, is properly considered, it is clear that the Schneider reference fails to disclose or suggest the ability of a structural component to be moved and/or pivoted, such as the claimed processing facility of the

Applicant's invention.

Therefore, absent an indication that the bath container (item 1) of Schneider is a "processing facility" as disclosed and recited as the Applicant's invention, and the rollers being transport members, Schneider fails to disclose the formation of a structural component which is able to be moved and/or pivoted. Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art would not be provided with the necessary motivation to look for an adjustment device in order to move the structural component. Therefore, there would be no reason or motivation to combine Haas (or even Huang) with Schneider.

But even if Haas (and/or Huang) were attempted to be combined with Schneider, as the Examiner proposes, this would still not teach, suggest or disclose the Applicant's present invention. Schneider does not disclose adjusting any rollers and the bath to the thickness of the workpieces. Haas, in turn, discloses a mechanism to adjust the location of the upper rollers to different thicknesses of printed circuit boards being treated in the Haas apparatus. Again, Haas does not disclose adjustment of the location of any processing facility for such different thicknesses of the printed circuit boards. Further, adjustment of the rollers in Haas is performed using a sensor and an adjustment mechanism comprising gear wheels and a motor drive. This is much more complicated than the Applicant's presently claimed invention, and, furthermore, Haas still fails to disclose adjustment of the location of the processing facilities.

Finally, the Huang reference (cited by the Examiner in the prior office action) also fails to disclose adjustment of the processing facilities to accommodate varying

thicknesses of the workpieces. In col. 5, lines 62-65, Haung discloses that the anode plates (68) are positioned in Figs. 4A and 4B very near to the ribs (32) of the anode positioning apparatus and that the same can also be positioned further away from the ribs by being disposed between the slots 42B. Such positioning, however, does not relate to the adjustment to the thickness of the workpieces. Furthermore, Huang does not disclose the processing facilities and the transport members being combined in a structural component and such structural component being moved and/or pivoted to be adjusted to varying thicknesses of the workpieces, as is disclosed and claimed by the Applicant's present invention.

For the same reasons set forth above, the rejection of claims 8 and 9 in view of Schneider and Haas, and the art referenced in Applicant's specification, on pages 1-4, also is respectfully traversed.

None of the cited references discloses a structural component which comprises both the transport members and the processing facilities, and furthermore, there is no teaching, suggestion or disclosure in the cited references of adaptation of the processing facilities in the apparatus to the thickness of the workpieces. Accordingly, the Applicant's present invention, as recited in the pending claims, is not obvious in view of the references cited and relied on in the office action.

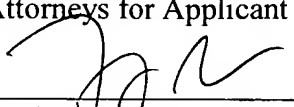
For the above reasons, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and a withdrawal of the outstanding rejections.

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If further matters remain in connection with this case, the Examiner is invited to telephone the Applicant's undersigned representative.

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